FELBERG ENGLISH READERS

VA BANQUE II

RIPOSTE

A crime comedy based on
an original film script by JULIUSZ MACHULSKI

SIMPLIFIED EDITION

Felberg SJA

Jerzy Siemasz

Va banque II. Ripostote. A crime comedy based on a Juliusz Machulski film

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Warsaw 2002

F E L B E R G E N G L I S H R E A D E R S

Va Banque II riposte

A crime comedy based on an original script by JULIUSZ MACHULSKI

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

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Warsaw 2002

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PROLOGUE

In Poland of the 1930s, a dishonest partner**,** one Gustav Kramer, **sets up** Kwinto, a man with the heart of gold, though a **safecracker**. With Kwinto in jail, Kramer establishes a bank and starts swindling his clients out of their money, **disposing** of some of them. Thus, Kwinto's musician friend is **defenestrated**, leaving his widow and child penniless. Finally, Kwinto goes out and starts **settling scores** with Kramer. Now it is he who sets Kramer up, and, consequently, the dishonest banker is put away for six years for having robbed his own bank.

CHAPTER ONE

It was May 1936. Kramer was **doing time** in the **maximum**

security prison in Sikawa. On a nice May day, the prisoners were out for a walk inside the walls. They were enjoying exercise, dressed in their **prison stripes**. In the corridor leading to the visiting room, Kramer's lawyer was talking to Stawiski, Kramer's former secretary at the bank.

"You know that I've done all I can," insisted the lawyer.

"You'll tell it to Kramer," Stawiski said.

They walked into a room, which had iron bars separating the prisoners from the visitors. Kramer, also in prison stripes, was waiting for them, angry and impatient.

"Where have you been all this time? What about my appeal?"

"Unfortunately, as of yesterday your **sentence** is fi**nal**," the lawyer said.

After a moment of silence, Kramer asked Stawiski in disbelief, "Is he serious?"

"I'm sorry, sir."

"Am I to do six years?"

"Don't worry. You'll be **paroled** in two or three years," the lawyer tried to comfort him. "Be patient."

"You were supposed to **spring** me! I'm in jail while Kwinto is outside!"

"The jails are full of innocent people," the lawyer tried to argue.

"I don't pay you for philosophizing!"

"Come to think of that, you already **owe** me 965 zloties not counting expenses."

"Whom have you **hired**?" Kramer shouted to Stawiski. "From now on he doesn't get another penny!"

"Quiet!" shouted the prison guard from behind them.

"This is our last conversation," the lawyer said, leaving.

"You couldn't even arrange a separate cell for me!" Kramer cried out furiously. "Do me a favor, Stawiski, and kick him in the you-know-what for me! Leave me alone, you beasts!" he shouted to the guards who were now pulling him away from the bars. "You don't know who I am!"

This only made the **inmate** Sztyc and his friend, listening to the scene in the box nearby, laugh heartily.

In the prison **sewing work-room**, there were two rows of sewing machines. Prisoners were working very vigorously sewing some kind of covers. Kramer was at his machine, his face full of **dogged** determination. He was sewing very efficiently, which only showed he'd been at it for quite some time.

Suddenly, Sztyc, a **streetwise-looking** prisoner, brought Kramer some more **canvas**. Leaning over him he said, "Banker, join me after exercise."

And he quickly moved to the back and disappeared.

Intrigued, Kramer asked the nearest prisoner:

"Who's he?"

"You don't know Sztyc?"

In the prison yard, during the break, Kramer walked up to Sztyc, who was lying on the grass, **soaking up** the sunshine. Kramer kicked him gently in the leg to attract his attention.

"I'm out in two days. There are four exits from jail, you know: pay out, run out, **work out**, and die out. How much can you pay for springing you in two weeks?" Sztyc asked.

"A third of what I've got."

"No, a half of what you have abroad."

"Are you out of your mind? Where abroad?"

Sztyc got up. "See you. We made a mistake."

"Wait a minute. It's a **deal**. But you help me get to Zurich."

"I get out in two days. I'll need $2,000 **up front**."

"Dollars? Why not 16,000 zloties?"

"Forget it!"

"What guarantee do I have?"

"None."

"OK. A **grand** outside and another on the border and the rest in Zurich."

Sztyc turned to leave, "So I was wrong. Bye."

Kramer took him by the arm, "I'd have to sign a check to get you your money."

"Your secretary will bring you one."

"What secretary?"

"Stawiski."

"You know too much about me," Kramer was really surprised.

"I'm too intelligent. You're lucky to have met me."

Sztyc walked away smiling. An older inmate turned to Kramer, "You, Banker, have got only money **on your mind**."

An elegant Fiat **pulled over** at the prison gate. In a moment the guard at the gate announced, "Mme Zwirski.

The **warden** is expecting her."

The door opened and an elegant woman was let in.

The warden was just talking on the phone. A bald middleaged man, he was speaking very politely. By the tone of his voice one could be sure his caller was definitely somebody important:

"Yes, sir, of course. She's just on her way here."

A beautiful, **shapely** brunette entered smiling.

"Thank you, sir. I wish you speedy recovery," the warden finished and **hung up.**

"What a charming place," said the lady, no trace of irony in her voice.

"I love your sense of humor, madam."

"My name's Mrs. Zwirski."

"Your husband was kind enough to call me. Be seated, please."

There was a funny thing about the office. Over the window, hung a cage with a songbird.

"How can I help you?"

"In the first place, by being discreet."

The warden was all ears, eyeing his visitor very carefully.

"I've come to do business," the lady went on, "with Gustav Kramer, the swindler who robbed his own bank." Here, she paused. "Can I be quite **frank**?"

"Absolutely."

"This must be only between you and me."

"My job often calls for particular discretion."

"This is a matter of extreme delicacy . . . My husband and I were silent partners in Kramer's bank, the fact of which the press has not been informed. He owes us a lot of money. It's a question . . ." she stopped undecided.

"Of getting the money back," the warden finished for her and picked up the package the lady had just dropped, embarrassed.

"Could I see him?" the lady wanted to know.

"Of course! The visiting room or . . ."

"I'd prefer . . ."

"Of course!" the warden understood immediately. "Excuse me . . . Malinowski!" he called his orderly. After a moment, a man walked in with a coffee pot and cups on a silver tray.

"Bring that ex-banker!" the warden ordered.

"Here?" the guard wondered.

"You heard me?"

"Yes, sir!" and the man walked out with the tray.

The warden sat down. "I think I've had the honor of meeting you somewhere . . ."

"One of the Minister's banquets?" she wondered.

"That's it!" he cried out happily. "You know," he said a moment later, "this Kramer had the nerve six months ago to demand a private cell all to himself! He thinks he's on vacation."

A guard appeared at the cell door. "Kramer, out!"

"They're moving you to a **spa**?" his inmates **mocked** him. Kramer **adjusted** his stripes and walked out.

In the office, Mme Zwirski was talking to the warden. "My husband thinks very highly of you. He was saying something about your promotion."

"I'm only trying to serve my country," the warden **modestly** replied.

Just then the door opened.

"Prisoner Kramer, sir!" said Kramer entering the room with the guard.

The warden **waved** the guard **away.**

"I'll leave you alone," said the warden.

"No, please stay. I'll feel safer," said the lady and turned to Kramer.

"You know why I'm here."

"I'm sorry, but . . ." Kramer looked surprised.

"You see?" she gave the warden a knowing look. "It's about money, Kramer. The money **put up** by us, my husband and me, for your bank in May 1930."

"Are you out of your mind?!" Kramer cried.

"Behave, Kramer!" the warden **warned** him.

"I don't know her, sir. She must be a **crook**."

"Hands up, baldhead!" Kramer pointed the pistol at the warden.

"A crook?" the lady was irritated.

"I'm being set up again, sir. What money?" he turned to her again.

"You have nerve," the lady said.

In the meantime, the warden started to read a newspaper so as not to interfere.

"This will explain," she said, handing Kramer the package she'd dropped before. Surprised, he opened it and found a pistol inside. The lady turned to the warden hiding behind his paper. "I say, Warden!"

"Yes, madam?"

"Hands up, **baldhead**!" Kramer pointed the pistol at the warden.

The lady came out of the prison building and walked up to the gate. The guard on duty started unlocking the gate, full of respect. Yet the moment she was about to step outside, she suddenly stopped and asked the guard,

"Did I come here with or without a dog?"

"With or without a dog?" the guard repeated surprised.

Now the office door opened and Kramer pushed the warden out, the pistol at his head. "Open up the gate!" he roared.

They moved toward the gate, the warden **struggling** to free himself.

"Lock the gate!" he shouted.

But it was useless, as Kramer was deadly determined to get out and wouldn't let the warden go. When the guard looked at the warden, he **nodded** his head, resigned. So the guard **stood at**

attention and the two passed through the prison gate. The Fiat was waiting for them, its engine running. Mme Zwirski opened the car door and Kramer pushed the warden in **at gunpoint**. The Fiat drove off at once, its driver an uniformed policeman. Soon there were other guards with dogs running toward the scene.

"Don't shoot! It's the warden!" the gatekeeper shouted. "**For**

God's sake, don't shoot!" The Fiat sped on, undisturbed.

Outside the town, the car door opened and a man was pushed out. He was dressed in prison stripes, a cap on. It was the warden. Soon he **collected** himself and got to his feet. Seeing the car driving away down the road, he started to shout, "After them! The WE 10516!"

That was the license number of the car. He ran after the car shouting. A melancholy-looking horse and **cart** passed him by without stopping . . .

CHAPTER TWO

Soon Kramer and Mme Zwirski drove up to a clearing in the woods. Stawiski was waiting for them. Smiling, Sztyc, his arms opened wide, ran up to welcome them. He was dressed in a **smart** suit now.

"It's an escape in modern style. **Filing** bars is out of date!"

Mme Zwirski took off her hat and **wig** and turned into a gorgeous blonde.

"He **fell for** that phone call," she told Sztyc, kissing him on the **cheek.**

"He thought he was talking to Zwirski."

"In Poland nobody **searches** his superiors or ladies," said Sztyc.

There were two cars parked among the trees.

Kramer got out of the car, dressed in the warden's uniform.

"Meet the Baroness—she's been like a sister to me." Sztyc introduced her and then his brother-in-law. He was the big man in a policeman's uniform who had driven the car.

"Big. Drives well too," Kramer said. "But why didn't you try to escape this way for all those years?"

"I'd be a wanted man like you are now."

All except Kramer started to laugh very much amused.

"Very funny," Kramer said angrily.

In the meantime, the brother-in-law put on an elegant suit. Sztyc handed them passports and tickets. "You'll be in

Zurich tomorrow. Now the money."

Stawiski gave him the dollars. "Bye bye!" said Sztyc.

Kramer, dressed in smart clothes now, was looking at his passport, undecided.

"Come on, you have a train to catch," Sztyc said.

"I'm not going," Kramer told them.

"What?" Mme Zwirski did not understand.

"I mean today. I have some unfinished business. An extra week or two makes no difference," Kramer was determined.

"So long now," said Mme Zwirski. "We've done our part." And they walked to their car.

"We'll **lie low**. And then take care of Kwinto."

"The safecracker?" Sztyc asked.

"The only one I know."

"In that case it's your **funeral**."

"You'll hide me and get a false ID," Kramer told him. "Who's **footing the bill,** after all?"

At the police station, a cop was talking to the superintendent.

"That Kramer has gone crazy. We found him on the road to Zegrze. Once, **loonies** used to aspire to being Napoleon. But he says he is a prison warden."

"Thank God it's you, superintendent. Kindly tell these ***bulvons*** who I am," said the warden, who was now **behind bars.**

"This is the warden of Sikawa prison," said the superintendent.

"You **broke out** too, sir?" a cop turned to the warden.

"Enough already!" the warden reprimanded him. "Have you caught Kramer?" he turned to the superintendent, "I remember their license number!"

"So you can let him out again?" the superintendent was angry. "First we catch him and then you let him escape!"

Kwinto was sitting in an armchair on the **porch** reading a newspaper.

Work was in progress on his fruit and vegetable farm outside the city. Some farm workers were loading **crates** with vegetables. There was a picture of Kramer in the paper, and Kwinto was reading about his spectacular escape.

Now Melski, his **overseer**, walked up to him.

"You'd better not go to work today, boss. Let's wait till things clear up."

"Coming to help me, Uncle?" It was little Justine, Marta's daughter, busy watering vegetables, asking Kwinto.

Kwinto did not answer.

"I have deliveries to make and I'll see **what's cooking** in town," Melski said.

"A call for you, Henry!" cried Marta from the house.

"Kwinto speaking," he said picking up the phone.

"Dane here. Looks like trouble again."

"He has enough troubles of his own. He's on the run." Kwinto told him.

"I'm taking a vacation," Dane said. "I suggest that you do the same."

"I've been on vacation for two years now. See you." Kwinto hung up.

Mox pulled over at the Sphinx Film Studio, which Dane was running now. He got out and ran into the building. He opened the office door without knocking.

"Did you hear the latest news?" he asked Dane sitting at his desk.

"That you've **given up** knocking?" was the answer.

"I'm sorry. We'd better warn Kwinto."

"You think he can't read?"

Mox pulled up a chair and sat down.

"What will Kramer **be up to** now? Shouldn't we move first?"

"I don't know about Kramer. We have a movie to shoot. And that's the most important thing. As for Kramer, he won't run away from us." Dane pulled a pistol out of his desk drawer. "Luckily it hasn't **rusted**," he added.

Marta came up to Kwinto as he was looking absently through the window.

what's cooking [slang] *co się dzieje* in Polish; **give up** *zaniechać*, *zrezygnować z* in Polish; **be up to** [potocznie] *mieć zamiar (coś) zrobić* in Polish; **rust** *zardzewieć* in Polish

"Something happened? . . . Why don't you ever tell me anything?"

"Because I love you," he said and walked away. She looked after him as he was heading for the garden. Now Melski walked into the room.

"Sorry, but I got no answer from the boss. Are we **raising** the price of beans?" And getting no answer, he asked again, "Peas neither?"

They heard the sound of a trumpet from the garden. It was Kwinto playing his instrument, sitting in a hammock. Little Justine was watching him fascinated . . .

The superintendent and his assistant arrived at Stawiski's villa. He met them at the gate, his hand on his cheek.

"T**oothache**? When did you last see Kramer?"

"Ask his secretary," Stawiski answered.

"Aren't you him?" the assistant asked.

"I'm no longer his secretary."

"No idea where he might be **holed up**?"

"No idea. Maybe he's gone abroad?"

"Would you if you were in his shoes?" pressed the assistant.

"It's got nothing to do with me. I'm an honest citizen. He's not here. Go ahead and see for yourself."

The superintendent gave him a long look. "Should Kramer happen to contact you, you'll let us know, honest citizen that you are, won't you?"

Stawiski did not say a word. The superintendent turned away to leave.

"Thank you. Be seeing you." And he walked to his car, smiling.

Stawiski closed the gate and waited for their car to drive off. Once they were gone, he went back into the house.

In the **basement**, Sztyc had just taken Kramer's picture. Kramer looked different now. He had **grown a beard** and was wearing glasses.

"A **fake** passport will cost you a lot," said Sztyc.

"The way you say it anyone would think it's your money," answered Kramer, angry.

"**The heat is** really **on**. It's not safe here," Stawiski told him.

"I'm not leaving till I see his **obituary**, Mr. Sztyc," Kramer said.

"I'm an honest crook, not a mafioso," Sztyc admitted. "Besides,

revenge makes no sense at all."

"As long as Kwinto's still alive, I'm not leaving or signing any more checks," Kramer said loud and clear.

"All right. I'll get you Kwinto. But once I have, we'll fl y to Switzerland."

"We? You little rat, you're taking advantage of me."

"If I were a Boy Scout, you'd still be inside."

"Out of jail, I'm Mr. Kramer to you."

"Yes, sir. The **customer** is always right," Sztyc looked Kramer in the eye, smiling.

It was evening. Stawiski entered a **joint** where the **demimonde** used to meet. He headed for the bar.

"Two vodkas," he told the barman. And after a while, "I need someone for a dangerous job."

"Like **roofing**?"

"In a rainstorm."

"You can **pick and choose** to your heart's content. There's been an amnesty. Try that guy sitting by himself. There."

Stawiski took the glasses and walked toward a big guy. "May I?"

"Depends on what," the guy said.

Stawiski waited for a moment, put the glasses on the table and sat down.

"I'm told you love adventure."

"Who's to be **hit**?"

Rather than answer Stawiski **spilled** the salt from a saucer on the table and wrote with his finger:

"Wrong address."

"Yes or no?"

"Spilling salt on Friday is bad luck." And the man left.

As Stawiski tried to erase the name, a man took him by the arm.

"Me, I'm not **superstitious**." And he sat down beside him.

The guy who had refused him went up to a pool player and whispered in his ear. The player, who was Melski, turned around and now they both watched Stawiski and his companion.

In his jazz club, Kwinto was playing the trumpet on the bandstand.

His face hidden in the shadow, he took a good look at the patrons. He watched Stawiski for quite some time . . .

The last patrons were going home, amused and a bit drunk. Kwinto was the last to leave. For a moment he stopped, a street light shining on him. He looked across the street at a darkened doorway. He watched it for a while, then turned back and reentered the club.

Stawiski's companion left the dark doorway and watched the entrance to the club. Now a man came out and started **shuttering** the main entrance.

Stawiski's man crossed the street.

"Is there a back door to this joint?"

"Yes, in the gateway."

He went into the backyard, his pistol at the ready. As he saw a light inside, he hid in the shadows and waited.

Now Kwinto left through the front door, walking stick in hand.

"Still here?" asked the man at the gate.

"The keys to the storeroom," said Kwinto and handed him some keys.

"Thanks. See you tomorrow."

The man at the back door was ready, silencer on his pistol.

Kwinto looked across the street at the dark doorway and walked away.

Suddenly, a limousine pulled up in front of him. Blinded by the headlights, Kwinto stepped back. A man leaned out the car window. It was Dane.

"**Gave you a scare,** didn't I? Get in."

Kwinto got in the car. Melski and Mox were in the back seat. Dane was driving.

"You had a meeting or what?" Kwinto asked.

"Kramer wants to kill you," Melski told him. "His secretary, Stawiski, hired a man by the name of Tedlar," he continued.

"I know him. A psycho," Kwinto answered.

"So Stawiski must know where Kramer is," Mox said. "How about **tipping off** the police?"

"Mox still doesn't get it," Dane said.

"If we could only know what's cooking."

"No problem. We could **tap** Stawiski's **phone**."

"Is that easy?"

"Just a couple of wires. I can do it tomorrow," Dane said.

"Maybe he'll give up on revenge?" Kwinto wondered.

"Kramer's an **Aries**. They never **let go**," Melski said with certainty.

"Stay home at least. For a week, okay?" Dane was quick to say.

"That much I can promise," Kwinto told them.

CHAPTER THREE

There was a knock on the door of Stawiski's villa. When Stawiski opened, Sztyc stormed in, mad as hell. He pushed Stawiski aside and was in the living room in a moment. He noticed Tedlar drinking coffee.

"You here too, Tedlar?"

"Mr. Kramer is busy," Stawiski told him.

"I don't care!" Sztyc answered handing him his hat. "This **recklessness** will ruin us!"

He went into the room where Kramer was hiding. A female voice screamed loudly.

"How dare you enter without knocking?" Kramer shouted angrily.

A half-dressed woman ran out of the room:

"How could you?" she reprimanded Sztyc.

Kramer was out of his room in a second, wearing a **dressing gown.** "I'm sorry, sir," Stawiski said, embarrassed. But Sztyc had no time for niceties: "Jesus, Kramer! Want to **blow** everything?" "Why?" "This idiot of your secretary hires a hit man, tipping off Kwinto. And this next idiot goes to Kwinto's club and **loses track of** him. Now we won't find him for another thirty years."

Tedlar lowered his head, so as not to look Kramer in the eye.

"Is that true?" Kramer asked Stawiski.

"In a manner of speaking," Stawiski answered quietly.

"This revenge of yours is only a waste of time. Why go to all this trouble?" Sztyc continued. "And now this woman!"

"I'm paying, so I decide," Kramer said firmly.

"Well, I'm in it too and I don't feel like seeing this place full of cops. And on top of everything these two idiots meet here!" He turned to Stawiski and Tedlar now, "Why, you could've been followed!" Sztyc was furious. He stopped shouting and drank from his glass.

"What do you suggest?" Kramer wanted to know.

"Have your revenge but let's get organized."

"Okay, as long as I read Kwinto's obituary."

"Killing is not the way to **get back at** a safecracker. Revenge hurts when the victim feels it."

"Killing hurts badly enough," Kramer was sure.

"I know how to fl **ush** Kwinto **out**," Sztyc said and handed Kramer a magazine with a large photo on the cover. "Take a look at this."

Kramer looked at the picture and recognized the girl at once:

"It's the girl they used on me as a **decoy**!"

"She's now a movie actress," Stawiski was quick to explain.

Natalie was in Dane's office at his film studio. She was looking at her picture, smiling happily.

"I'm becoming famous!"

"Yes, but this magazine cover cost me a grand," Dane told her.

"Now beautiful faces **pay off**," Mox said.

"Personally, I'd pay a grand to **suppress** this," Dane said after a while.

"Why? It's so good," Natalie protested.

"It can be bought at every newsstand in town. I don't want Kramer here."

"He's history," Mox said with certainty.

"He's **outside** now," Dane said.

"They haven't caught him yet?" Natalie asked.

"Not yet. So you have to leave at once," Dane demanded.

"I can't. I have an important scene tomorrow," she answered.

"And tonight you have a more important train to Lvov," said Dane handing her a train ticket.

"Am I in danger?" she asked.

"You put him in jail," Dane told her.

"Maybe it'd be enough if I kept an eye on her?" Mox interrupted putting his arm around Natalie.

"Suppose it isn't?" Dane insisted.

An assistant director was hiring **extras** for a historical film. Tedlar was among them. The director picked and chose among the men standing in front of him.

"Your name?" he finally asked Tedlar.

"Jan Kowalski."

"Perfect. Just the face."

And Tedlar was hired.

A **medieval** knight in armor entered Dane's study.

"Mr. Dane?" he asked.

"That depends," Dane said standing up. "You've come about money?" he added in a hurry seeing the knight pull a gun.

"Kramer sends his regards," said the knight, shot him, and left. Dane **grabbed** his side and fell to the fl oor.

In a moment Mox and Natalie were by his side.

"Boss? Have you had an accident?" Mox asked.

"Don't ask stupid questions. Call the doctor," Dane said and **passed out.**

In Stawiski's villa, Kramer was furious to hear the news.

"So Dane is still alive? You were supposed to ask about Kwinto first and shoot next." He turned to Stawiski, "Whom have you hired? Some hitman!" he turned to Tedlar again, "You can't even shoot straight!"

"Even if he'd killed him, he wouldn't know where Kwinto is anyway," Sztyc said. "Everything's going to plan."

"Our deadline was Saturday!" Kramer shouted.

"Why, it's only Wednesday."

"You don't even know where to look for him! Don't smoke here!" he reprimanded Sztyc, "I can't even breathe!"

"You have no idea about psychology," Sztyc told him. "Dane and Kwinto are friends, right?"

"Exactly."

"So it's a fair bet that right now Kwinto is at his bedside, in the hospital."

A barber finished shaving Dane in his hospital bed and went out, leaving Kwinto and Mox at the bedside.

"You shouldn't have come here," Dane said. "Suppose I was shot as **bait**.."

"At the **morgue** they told me you're still here," Kwinto answered.

"The morgue? Without you there too? Never."

"I feel guilty it's you here," Kwinto admitted.

"So do I—I can't help you now."

"Did you manage to tap that phone?"

"I was just getting my tools when he started shooting."

"Tell me how and I'll do it, boss," Mox was **eager** to help.

"No, you **mind the store**. How about your brother?"

"Note? Forget him. He got married."

A nurse interrupted them:

"Excuse me, gentlemen. The patient must rest."

"You need anything?" Kwinto wanted to know.

"A cigar," Dane whispered, afraid of the nurse. Kwinto left him one.

"See you, boss," said Mox as they were leaving.

"What's Note into now?" Kwinto asked in the corridor.

"He dropped out of this business. But I'll do it."

"Where does he live?"

"14 Hołówki Street, apt. 8"

"Be there tomorrow at ten."

"Excuse me," a man brushed against them hurrying with fl owers down the corridor. It was Sztyc. He turned his head and gave them a long look.

"Keep an eye on Dane." Kwinto said and was off.

Mox stayed in the hospital corridor. Sztyc hurried on toward the entrance.

Kwinto left by the main door. He stopped and looked up to see if it was beginning to rain. A **sandwich man**, dressed up as a white bottle advertising 'Milk for the **Orphans**,' was standing by the door. As Kwinto went down the street, the man followed him at a distance. Soon Sztyc ran out of the

hospital door. He gave the fl owers to a fl ower girl and looked around. He noticed the 'milk bottle' walking down the street. So he crossed the street and followed the 'bottle.' A moment later Kwinto stopped and reached out his hand again as if to see if it was raining. He turned to face a **confectionery** on the right. Now he took out a mirror and looked into it. He saw the 'milk bottle' stop close behind him and knew at once what was cooking. So he entered the store. Now the 'milk bottle' and Sztyc, on the other side of the street, stopped near the bakery, undecided what to do. In a little while Sztyc was next to the 'bottle' and whispered something to him.

Kwinto left the store by the back door . . . Walking down the street, he noticed Sztyc with his back to him watching his parked car. Marta and Justine were waiting by the car. Kwinto stopped for a moment as if to turn back and, suddenly, fell into the arms of Justine running up to him.

"Uncle Henry! You've never been late before!"

He picked her up and carried her to the car, where Marta was waiting **anxiously.**

"You've never been late before," Marta said.

They got in the car and drove off, Justine looking at Sztyc. He was standing at a distance, watching them drive off, frustrated.

Mox rang the doorbell of Note's apartment.

"Bill collector!" he shouted to frighten Note, who opened the door for him.

Note was evidently drunk. There were lots of empty bottles in the room.

"Note? Going into the bottle business? What's the matter? What happened to you?" Mox started to shout.

"Get out of here!" Note showed him the door. "You're not my brother anymore! Out!" cried Note in a drunken voice.

"I sold you to Kwinto as a wiretap genius. We have to tap Stawiski's phone!"

"Me wiretap?" Note was angry.

"Kwinto's **in a jam**. Dane has been shot. And you **don't give**

a damn? How are you living? What on?"

Irritated, Mox pushed Note onto the sofa. Too weak to fight, Note fell on his back.

"Food. I eat and live," he replied. But he suddenly got up and threw himself at Mox:

"Where are my forks? Where's all my **cutlery**? Where's everything?"

At the open door, Kwinto was calmly watching the scene. Now Note noticed him.

"What do you want?"

Kwinto did not reply. He was watching the scene in silence, undecided whether to intervene . . . Note came to his senses at once. He **pulled himself together** and asked Kwinto inside politely:

"Please come in. Excuse the **mess**. No woman's touch. My woman has left me. She took little Lou and ran away with the consul to Germany." He took out a photograph. "That's him," he showed the photo to Kwinto.

"What consul? You lost her at cards!" Mox was mad at his brother.

Kwinto sadly shook his head. He showed Note a bottle of champagne he had brought for the occasion.

"I thought we'd celebrate our meeting. I'd best leave it here. See you, Note." And he was gone.

"Don't go!" Note cried in despair, but Kwinto went anyway.

"Next time we meet I'll **cut you dead**!" Mox said in anger and was gone too. Note started to **sob** holding the champagne bottle in his hands.

CHAPTER FOUR

Kwinto and Mox were back in Dane's office. Mox was walking

to and fro beside himself with anger. "My own brother—a **bum**!" "Without wiretapping we can only wait," Kwinto said. "You're probably being **tailed**," Mox told him. "No longer. And that worries me," Kwinto added. There was a knock at the door. Mox in panic started looking for his gun.

"Just a second!" he shouted.

Kwinto put on his hat. He was ready for the visitor . . . The door slowly opened. Hat in hand, Note was standing there, embarrassed. Kwinto slowly took off his hat, relaxed now.

"You fool!" Mox said to Note, his pistol in hand.

"Hello! I want to apologize for yesterday's indisposition. It won't happen again. I promise," Note said and got down to business at once. "We have to find Stawiski's line."

"How do you plan to do that?" Mox asked.

Note took a telephone out of the box he'd brought with him.

"This is more or less a standard phone," he explained. "I've only added some improvements."

Mox was completely surprised. He was watching Note in disbelief, who looked quite different now in a clean and well pressed suit.

"Where the hell did you get that? Wait a minute! It's from our costume department!"

"I'll **settle up** on payday. I'm working again," Note answered.

Mox **brightened up**. He looked questioningly at Kwinto . . .

There was a truck in front of Stawiski's villa. Several workmen were unloading a big safe.

"To the garage?" one of them asked Stawiski.

"Yes, right here."

Note, dressed like a postal worker, walked up to them.

"What is it?" Stawiski asked him.

"Phone repairs. We're checking lines now. Yours has been disconnected."

"Mine's working."

"Would you check, please?"

"Very well. Wait here."

Stawiski ran inside and checked the phone. It was dead. He came right back.

"You were right. Come on in."

"Phones are an ear on the world, sir. Out of order. It's like wearing earplugs," Note tried to humor Stawiski.

"All right. **Get on with it**," Stawiski said and went out to see how the workmen were doing. Note was happy to be left alone, to tap the phone . . .

The telephone rang in the basement and Stawiski answered it. "Zurich's on the line, sir," he told Kramer.

The telephone rang in the basement and Stawiski answered it.

"Zurich's on the line, sir," he told Kramer.

Kramer picked up the r**eceiver**. So did Mox in Dane's study. He, Kwinto, Note, and Melski were waiting for this call.

"*We're waiting for you, sir,*" said a voice on the other end of the line.

"It's Kramer," Mox told the others in the study, "He's at Stawiski's place, the **SOB**."

"How about tipping off the law?" Note suggested.

"How stupid can you get?" Mox wondered at his brother. "You don't understand a thing."

"*$3000 dollars will do,*" said the voice in Zurich. "*When are you leaving? I have to take care of security here.*"

"Right away. See you in Zurich," Kramer told him.

"*I'll pass the phone to the Baroness,*" the voice said.

Kramer gave Sztyc the receiver, "For you."

"*Six miles past the German border you take the* ***turnoff*** *to Bülach. A man named Streich will be waiting for you. Two hours more and you'll be in Zurich,*" she told him.

"But that's 400 miles!"

"I hired a plane."

"Baroness, you're wonderful!"

"I **take after you**. We'll call again at the usual time, Sunday at 10:00. That's all for now."

"See you in Zurich," Sztyc said. "Zurich!" he repeated fascinated. "Can't you just smell that **wealth**?"

"I hate fl ying! Can't we go by car?" Kramer protested.

"All the way across Germany for eight hours! Tomorrow we finish off Kwinto."

"A machine that fl ies, is that normal?" Kramer maintained his point of view.

"The quicker we're there the better," Stawiski remarked.

"A plane? What's the big idea?" Note wondered.

"And why Switzerland? Does Kramer have a bank account there?" Mox wanted to know.

"A safe was being delivered when I was at the house," Note said.

"A safe? What are they waiting for?" Melski wondered.

"Business of some kind," Kwinto said, lifting a cup of tea to his lips.

"But what?" Mox asked.

"Me," Kwinto replied.

It was noon. In the hospital garden, Dane was relaxing in a **deckchair**. Kwinto was by his side. A nurse brought Dane something to drink.

"Only you can help me," Kwinto told his friend.

"I'm afraid I can't. I'm too weak. You know I'm not saying that as an excuse."

"What about your army contacts?"

"Ever since I lost one of their tanks **on the set,** they won't lend me even a pair of leggings."

"If I ever again think of getting back at someone, kick me in the you-know-what."

"**You got it**."

Kwinto got up and slowly walked away. He didn't hear Dane calling him to come back.

The assistant director was explaining to Kwinto how he planned to prepare the movie set. They were in front of Kwinto's house in the country.

"Here a lawn and fl owerbeds. You'll have a lovely view."

"Can you finish it on time?" Kwinto asked.

"It'll be all ready just as you wanted," the director promised.

Kwinto walked away. He didn't hear the director say, worried, "So little time."

In Justine's classroom, the teacher asked the kids:

"Would any of you like to be in a movie?"

"Yes!" was the **unanimous** reply.

"That's what I thought. These gentlemen are looking for extras," she introduced Sztyc and Tedlar.

Sztyc started choosing the girls. He finally pointed at four of them and chose one more. It was Justine.

"Thank you. It's only for a couple of hours," Sztyc told the teacher as they were leaving with the girls . . .

"Why Justine?" Marta was crying.

"The teacher said some movie people came to the school. They chose five girls. Four came back. One didn't," Mox told Marta and Kwinto.

The telephone rang. Kwinto went to answer it.

"If you care about Justine, come to 16 Akacjowa Street in two hours. Alone," a voice told him.

"I'll be there," Kwinto hung up.

"Who was that?" Marta asked.

"Justine has been found," Kwinto told her.

"Where is she?"

"In a safe place."

"I'll bring her home!" Marta was eager to go.

"No, I have to go there myself," Kwinto said.

"What's happened? We'd better call the police," Marta advised.

"If we do that, she won't return."

"Tell me the truth, Henry. I can take it," Marta was in despair. She started to cry on Kwinto's shoulder. Mox and

Note went outside to let Kwinto and Marta talk in private.

"A guy was sprung from prison. He thinks he has a score to settle with me. But he's made the mistake of **involving** Justine. He will be punished for that."

"Why must you always be the one to do justice? I don't want them to put you in jail. I couldn't stand it, left here without you."

"You'll never see me in jail. That I promise."

Kwinto shaved and took time to get dressed as smartly as he could. He took his walking stick. When he was leaving, he told Marta:

"Don't worry. I seldom fail."

Dane, Mox, and Note drove him to Akacjowa Street. It was already dark. They pulled over at Stawiski's villa.

"As soon as she is safely in the car, sound the horn and drive her home. Whatever happens, don't let Kramer escape." Now Kwinto turned to Dane, "I'm glad to see you are feeling better."

Kwinto walked away toward the villa.

He saw Sztyc when he entered the garage.

"You're right on time. My name is Sztyc. Pleased to meet you. What a fine walking stick? May I see it?" He took the stick away from Kwinto.

"Where is she?" Kwinto asked.

Sztyc noticed the sword in the stick. "How clever!" Now he answered the question, "The girl will be okay, as I promised." He turned to Tedlar, "You were to check him out," he said handing him the sword. "This won't be **the Lindbergh case**."

He opened the back door, to let Kramer and Stawiski enter. Kramer walked up to Kwinto and looked him in the

eye.

"It's been a long time, Kwinto."

"Where is she?"

"All in good time. You know I keep my word. You managed to put me in jail, but I hope you appreciate my riposte." Kramer uncovered a big safe in the corner of the room. "The girl's inside."

Kwinto slowly walked up to Kramer:

"You shouldn't have done this."

"I had to wait two years."

Kwinto slowly walked to the safe and started working on it. It took time.

"He's **losing his touch**," Kramer remarked to the others. "And the air's running out!" he laughed.

In one sudden move Kwinto opened the safe.

"Fingers like those are pure gold," Sztyc said fascinated.

"How long did it take him, Stawiski?" Kramer asked.

"4 minutes 27 seconds."

"That's a poor show," Kramer said.

Justine was sitting at the bottom of the safe looking up at Kwinto.

"What kept you so long, Uncle?"

Kwinto turned to Kramer, "You have me so let her go."

"Sure. We play fair."

"There's a car outside. It'll take you to Mom," Kwinto told Justine.

"What about you?" she asked.

"I'll be home later."

"But tell Mommy not to wait up for Daddy," Kramer said with certainty.

The girl left. The horn was sounded, and Kwinto made a move toward the door. But Kramer stopped him.

"Where are you going?"

"It's too bad you escaped from jail. Worse still you hit my friend Dane. But kidnapping the child is unforgivable. But I'm not **vindictive**. Seeing you **turn yourself in** will be enough."

Kramer laughed:

"You seem to have lost your **marbles**. It's you who's going back to jail, to Sikawa, to my cell. We'll send you parcels."

A heavy iron curtain, like a gigantic grill, suddenly went down, separating Kwinto from the others.

"The curtain! Mr. Sztyc thought of it!" Kramer triumphed. "Kwinto **caught red-handed**. Mr. Stawiski will report a break-in and a burglar caught in a **cage**. I'm afraid I won't be able to see the fun. Let's go."

"See you in Switzerland," Kwinto told him.

That made them stop, surprised.

"That was supposed to be a secret," Kramer told his men.

Kwinto was smiling from behind the bars.

"You're just bluffing," Kramer told Kwinto. "Even we don't know how to raise this grill. Let's go."

Which they did, except Sztyc, who stayed for a while.

"This is no business for **softies**. You've gotten old. You've forgotten that **the end justifies the means**. I've always admired you, though."

With this Sztyc left. Tedlar returned from the door with a promise:

"I'll kill you, Kwinto." And left too.

Outside, Sztyc said to Kramer, "Saturday, just like I said."

"Watch him until the police get here," Kramer told Stawiski. "Thank you."

"I'll see to everything and keep in touch," Stawiski promised.

"If anything **comes up**, call me. We leave on Tuesday," Sztyc told him.

CHAPTER FIVE

Inside, Kwinto took off his coat and then his belt. Out of it he produced a file as thin as a human hair. He started to cut one of the bars with the file.

Upstairs, Stawiski dialed a phone number. "This is the police station," he heard. "The superintendent, please," he said.

The overheated file soon broke. For a little while, Kwinto did not know what to do. There were some gas cans near Stawiski's car outside the iron bars. He reached through the bars to get hold of one of them. But it was too far for him to reach.

The assistant spoke to the superintendent as they were leaving the police station.

"This makes our week!"

"It's too good to be true. Kwinto's retired," the superintendent replied.

"But **the leopard cannot change his spots**," the other argued.

Somehow, Kwinto managed to r**ope** a can with his belt, which he pulled toward the bars. The can being too big, he could not pull it through the bars, as it stuck halfway through. **Undaunted**, he unscrewed the cap. Next he took off his tie.

Upstairs, Stawiski was finishing his business with Tedlar. "You can go now. Bring back the car on Tuesday." "At your service, any time," Tedlar said leaving.

Kwinto dipped his tie in the can and left it there. Next he reached for matches . . .

Outside, Tedlar had second thoughts. He checked his pistol and hurried to the garage.

Inside, Kwinto lit his gas**soaked** tie. A fire started in the garage. Kwinto hid in the safe.

Having poured whisky into his glass, Stawiski came out onto the balcony over the garage. Suddenly, he heard an explosion **underneath** and the sound of breaking glass. In panic, Stawiski ran toward the garage door.

The explosion bent the bars enough for Kwinto to pass through. He ran away as other cans caught fire and started to explode.

Stawiski ran up to the superintendent, who was now on the spot.

"Fire!" he cried.

"You called the police?" the superintendent wanted to make sure.

"Yes."

"But you need the fire brigade."

"I called them too . . . My brand new house! Jesus Christ!" Stawiski, his fingers shaking nervously, took out a cigarette, "Got a light?" he asked the assistant.

"Are you trying to start a fire?" the assistant asked and took his lighter away from under Stawiski's nose.

The fire brigade pulled up in front of the burning house.

Their job finished, the fire chief walked up to Stawiski. "That'll be 127 zloties."

soak *to wet thoroughly*; **underneath** *below the surface or level of*

Stawiski paid him, resigned.

"Everything has gone up in smoke: my house, car, money. For God's sake, why did I get into this?" he despaired.

"Were you insured?" the superintendent asked him.

"Yes."

"A clever little **trap**," the superintendent told him, having examined the twisted bars in the garage. "You thought it up yourself?"

Depressed, Stawiski did not answer. The superintendent walked up to a **charred** body on the fl oor.

"Is that the thief?" he asked. "What's that shining there? Take a look."

"A medallion," the assistant said handing the superintendent a shining gold cross.

"H.K. 1885," the superintendent read. "Henry Kwinto! He preferred dying to getting caught. He must've lost his marbles with old age."

A funeral **cortege** was slowly moving toward the cemetery, headed by a priest with an **altar boy**. The coffin had the following name on it:

The coffin was followed by his best friends, including Mox and Note. Marta and Justine walked close behind, Natalie on Dane's arm, who was leaning on a walking stick. Quite a crowd from the criminal world had been attracted to the ceremony along with the superintendent with his assistant and some policemen in uniforms. Kwinto's musician friends were playing his favorite *Blues for the Trumpet*. They were slowly passing a car with Sztyc inside, sitting beside a bearded character in glasses. It was Kramer wearing a false beard, overjoyed to be present at his enemy's funeral.

"Cops everywhere. We're **pushing our luck**," said Sztyc, looking around nervously.

"It's the end of an era," Kramer commented sadly.

"Don't cry. Else your beard will **come unstuck**," Sztyc warned him.

"True. Let's go."

The warden was called **on the carpet** by Zwirski, his superior.

"It's been eight days. Well?"

"I've done everything I can," the warden explained, very much afraid.

"Kramer's disappeared. **Needle in a haystack**."

"Running a prison is even harder," the boss said dryly. "Do you see a future for yourself? An escape in broad daylight makes you look pretty stupid."

"That woman passed herself off as your wife. I tried my best, sir."

"And you call it your best, eh? Like your efforts to find Kramer. Even if you do I wonder if that's enough."

"I'll find him. There's a full scale alert. He can't get away."

"So you think. In the meantime, you'll take a vacation. And that's that."

"Please give me one more chance. That prison means everything to me. Take a look at this **mock-up**," the warden produced a paper model and showed it to his boss. "Certain innovations would make it impossible to escape from prison.

For instance in Alcatraz the inmates aren't allowed to talk. We could install **booby traps**."

The boss put the mock-up to one side. "Your only chance is to find Kramer and bring him back to Sikawa. As for Alcatraz, I suggest that you forget it," he said, tearing the paper model into pieces. "Good day!"

"Jesus!" whispered the warden picking up the torn pieces of paper.

Sztyc and Kramer were driving fast toward the **border.**

"They're following us," Sztyc said, worried.

"Let them pass," Kramer told him and they pulled over. The other car did too.

"They've stopped," Kramer was worried now.

"It's all your **fault**. They must have noticed us at the cemetery."

"The police?"

"Police hell! Kwinto's friends."

Kramer pulled a revolver and got ready to shoot.

"Throw that away!"

But Kramer wouldn't listen:

"Better safe than sorry. **Step on it**."

They drove off and so did the other car. Soon they saw a barrier across the road.

"A **detour**. Turn right!" Kramer cried.

The car turned and sped toward the border. The other car, however, ran into the barrier and stopped. One of its tires was fl at. Mox and Note got out, angry.

"A nail," said Note. "How did a nail get here?" he wondered.

"Change the tire and go after them!" Mox cried. But he knew it was useless.

Depressed and desperate, the warden finally landed in a joint. It was the same one in which Stawiski had met Tedlar.

"Thank God you're open. A double vodka, please."

"Today it's **on the house**," the barman said pouring him one.

"Suits me fine," the warden downed his glass. "How come?"

"A **wake** for Kwinto," the barman replied. "You know who he was?"

"Of course! One of my former inmates."

He took his glass and walked to another room, only to notice a group of his **excons** at the table.

"Hi, old friends!" he saluted them with sarcasm.

Sztyc's car was stopped at a border **checkpoint**. Sztyc and Kramer got out.

"Passports please," the Polish guard said and he looked at the passport photos to see if they matched Sztyc and Kramer.

"Mr. Sztyc? . . . Mr. Goldfinger?"

"Yes," answered Kramer in a hurry.

"You have a stamp missing," the guard said looking at Kramer's passport.

Sztyc looked at Kramer in panic. A long while later, the guard said:

"Sorry, my mistake."

Yet the other guard fl ashed his light into their faces, which made Kramer angry.

"Still not satisfied?" he remarked, irritated.

"**Steady on**," the guard replied.

"He has **conjunctivitis**," Sztyc tried to explain Kramer's irritation. "Are you looking for someone?"

"That's our business. Where are you heading?"

"Switzerland," Kramer replied quickly.

"Wouldn't it be quicker via Czechoslovakia?" the guard asked with suspicion. "Anything to **declare**?"

"No," they both answered.

"Are you hiding anyone?" the guard asked pointing at the car.

"You must be joking," Sztyc said.

"Thank you. Have a nice trip," said the guard and they were free to go.

CHAPTER SIX

Next they drove up to the German border checkpoint. There was a fl ag with a large swastika on it. A German **customs officer** walked up to the car:

"What's your **destination**?"

"Zurich."

"**Purpose**?"

"Business."

"Anything to declare?"

"No."

"*Herr* Goldfinger," the officer asked, "are you a Jew?"

A guard had a close look at Kramer's face, whose false beard and glasses along with his new name made him look like the quintessential Jewish banker.

"Do I look like a Jew?" Kramer asked, surprised.

The officer fl ashed his light at his face while the other looked at his passport once again and concluded:

"If you're a Jew, you must pay for transit."

"Call this freedom!" said Kramer angrily. "My father was German. He served under Feldmarschall Ludendorff!"

"Then you can return to the Fatherland," the guard suggested smiling.

"Politics don't interest me."

"But you interest politics!"

"Get out!" the other guard ordered.

Kramer followed the order. As he was getting out, however, he dropped his pistol on the ground. The officer picked it up.

"What's this? A pistol. Do you have a **license**?"

"I left it behind."

"So it's contraband?"

"You can keep it. I don't need it any longer," said Kramer, smiling at the guard. Sztyc fl ashed a smile too.

"My dear Goldfinger, that would be too simple. Come with me."

Sztyc gently intervened:

"Could we have a few words in private?" he asked and showed some money.

"P*olnische Schwein!* You think you can **bribe** a German soldier?" the officer got angry.

But the sum offered was an impressive $2000. So the guard said:

"Welcome to the 1000-year Reich."

And they were allowed to cross the border.

The moment they got away they started to shout at each other.

"I said throw it away. That was a **close call**," Sztyc cried.

"You're too **generous** with my money," Kramer was furious.

"We're lucky they let us through!"

"It's Bülach. Turn right!" shouted Kramer, having noticed a road sign.

There the plane was waiting for them.

"Can that really fl y?" Kramer had his doubts.

"Act your age! That's a Swiss plane!"

"*Herr* Streich?" Kramer asked the pilot.

"*Ja*. K*ommen Sie, bitte*," he answered.

"Hurry up!" Kramer cried to Sztyc and in a moment they were **on board** the plane. It **took off** into the night sky. There were city lights below.

"*München! In einer Stunde sind wir in Zurich*," the pilot said.

"What did he say?" Sztyc asked Kramer.

"Munich—in an hour we'll be in Zurich"

In the restaurant, the warden, drunk by now, was telling his story to sympathetic listeners. Dane and Melski were among them.

"Then Kramer pulled a gun—one of those handbag jobs. The guards held their fire. I told them to shoot to kill me, her, him. But they let him go. And Zwirski tore up my mock-up though he's not even that woman's husband."

Here the warden broke down and started to cry.

"You have an opportunity to do a good **deed**," Dane told him.

"How about some more, Warden?" Melski asked him, offering another full glass. The warden downed it in one **gulp.**

The plane finally landed. The pilot, Kramer, and Sztyc got out.

"*Danke*," Sztyc thanked the pilot.

He told them that Odermall's villa was only 220 yards away from.

"A*uf wiedersehen*," Kramer said to him.

"*Ein moment! Noch 3000 Franken*."

"Didn't Odermall pay him?" Kramer asked Sztyc.

"He did," Sztyc was sure of that.

The pilot explained that the **down payment** was only 1000.

"I have only dollars," Kramer said.

"Okay! W*ir sind hier in der Schweiz.*"

"Any bank will change them," Sztyc told Kramer.

So, like it or not, Kramer had to pay the pilot and then they left. A moment later they saw some high mountains against the night sky. Kramer was enthusiastic:

"The Alps! At last I feel free!"

"A starry sky above me **gleams** and banks beyond my wildest dreams," Sztyc answered him in rhyme.

They ran to the door of a house in the dark and knocked at the door. The house was dark. Nobody answered.

"The key," Sztyc noticed something in the door.

"Isn't he afraid of burglars?" Kramer wondered.

"We're in Switzerland, aren't we?" Sztyc reminded him.

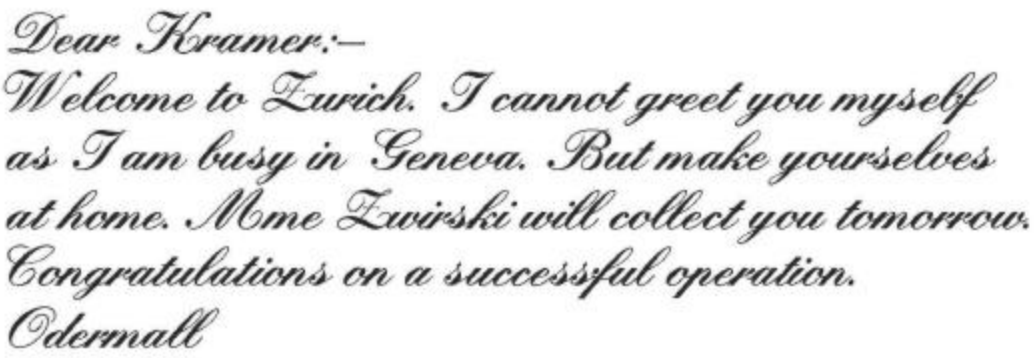
"Auf wiedersehen," *Kramer said to him.*

"Ein moment! Noch 3000 Franken."

"*Didn't Odermall pay him?*" *Kramer asked Sztyc.*

"So we are. I forgot," Kramer said.

They opened the door and went in. In the living room, they found a letter by a bottle of whisky on the table. Kramer picked it up and saw his name on the envelope. He read the letter:


Dear Kramer:—
Welcome to Zurich. I cannot greet you myself
as I am busy in Geneva. But make yourselves
at home. Mme Zwirski will collect you tomorrow.
Congratulations on a successful operation.
Odermall

"She won't be here until tomorrow," Kramer said and he noticed the whisky. "Ballantine's!" he said, impressed.

"The best whisky in the world," Sztyc was sure of that.

They laughed, relaxed, and Sztyc opened the bottle. They took off their coats.

"You're too free with my money but I like you," Kramer told Sztyc.

"Thanks," Sztyc said, "Switzerland's only a **stepping stone** for me."

"What do you mean?"

"My **goal** is America!"

"You're a **smart cookie**. You'll go far there," said Kramer and a minute later, "Call me Gustav."

"Call me Ed," Sztyc replied in return.

"How did you know I have a Swiss bank account?" Kramer asked.

"I didn't. I was bluffing."

"Suppose you'd been wrong?"

"You'd still be inside."

They drank to that, both in seventh heaven.

Kramer woke up at the sound of a trumpet. He drank from the bottle and tried to go back to sleep. But the trumpeting continued. So he got up and walked downstairs. He started shaking Sztyc, who was **sleeping like a log.**

"Wake up, Ed!" he cried but to no avail.

Now he noticed it was a record player by the wall. He turned it off. The trumpet continued playing, though. Sztyc was still fast asleep. Kramer ran to the kitchen. Kwinto was hiding in the dark.

"I've come to punish you. You'll go back to jail. But if you ever again try to hurt anyone dear to me, I'll kill you!"

"What do you want? Money?" Kramer answered in panic. "Here! Gold, dollars—take it!"

"Sign your checks!"

Kramer took out his checkbook and a pen.

"Blank?"

"All of them!"

"What the hell!" he started signing checks in a hurry, but soon stopped.

"No! No! No!" he shouted and tried to run away. "Kwinto! You're supposed to be dead!"

Melski picked up the drunken warden and drove him to the villa to put him to bed.

"Bedtime, Warden," he told him when he protested.

"The Bastille must be torn down before it is built!" argued the warden, completely drunk. Before long he was fast asleep.

Sztyc woke up at the sound of **barking** dogs. He got up and walked up to the window. There he saw two black cars

pull up in front of the villa. In panic, Sztyc put on his shoes, grabbed his coat, and ran outside.

Kramer woke up facing the sleeping warden. The other woke up too and cried out happily, "That's it!" at the sight of Kramer.

"My God, what's he doing in my bed?" shouted Kramer and they started to fight. Now the superintendent entered the room.

"Good morning. I see I didn't wake you," he said.

The two men on the bed continued fighting.

"Pull him off! He'll **give me rabies**!" cried Kramer.

Finally, the fighting stopped and the warden reached out his hands to the superintendent:

"Superintendent Adventure!"

"What're you doing here?" shouted Kramer. "You have no authority to **hunt** me **down** abroad!"

The superintendent and some accompanying policemen watched them in silence.

Sztyc, running away from the villa, noticed a horse and cart passing by on the road. He ran up to the cart and tried to fl **ag** it

down. He shouted: "*Nach Zurich!*"

bark *szczekać* in Polish; **give (someone) rabies** tu: *zarazić (kogoś) wścieklizną* in Polish; **hunt down** [potocznie] *ścigać* in Polish; fl **ag down** tu: *dać sygnał do zatrzymania* in Polish

The Polish farmer did not understand what Sztyc was yelling in German and sped on, leaving him by the crossroads. Alone now, he looked up and saw a **signpost** reading:

"No! No! No!" he cried and laughed like a madman. He threw his coat over the signpost.

"It's impossible! Passport 1000, customs officers 2000, plane and cars 2000. That makes $5000. An out-of-town excursion for over 20,000 zloties? I must be dreaming! Who **screwed** us? Where's Switzerland?"

Now everyone was laughing and drinking champagne at the Sphinx, Dane's film studio. The actors were taking off their police uniforms and collecting signposts for Zurich, Munich, etc. Dane was paying the extras for their work.

"You gave the **performances** of your lives," Mox congratulated them.

"He showed them Poznań pretending it was Munich," Note laughed.

"That's the last time I play a German," the actor who'd played the German guard protested, "I only did it as a favor to the director," he walked away angry.

"'Va Banque' extras collect your checks," a voice was calling.

"You see? Cinema is the most important art," Mox said.

In front of the villa, the superintendent spoke to the assistant director:

"Thanks for helping us catch him."

"You're welcome. Two men in one bed? I had to call the police," the other answered.

signpost tu: *drogowskaz* in Polish; **screw** [slang] *wrobić kogoś, zrobić na szaro, oszukać* in Polish; **performance** tu: *odegranie roli aktorskiej* in Polish

The warden caught up with Kramer, led by two policemen:

"You'll rot in my fortress," he shouted.

"Never mind," said Kramer, "It was worth it. At least Kwinto is dead!"

"You'll be in irons. Let's go!" the warden promised him.

Dane and Kwinto were standing in front of Lloyd's Bank on a Zurich street. There were banks aplenty all around them.

"It's tempting you, isn't it?" Dane asked Kwinto. "Me too," he added.

Kwinto took out Kramer's checkbook.

"**Courtesy** of Kramer."

"Will they honor it?" Dane asked.

They entered the bank, went to the window, and gave the

teller a check. He read the check and looked at them with a **scrutinizing** eye. "*Ein Moment, bitte*.." But he soon paid them out a whole **briefcase** of bills. Some time later, when they had sat down on a bench to relax, Dane noticed a box of pralines in Kwinto's hand.

"Chocolates for Justine?"

"There's no need. They're arriving tomorrow."

"What will you do with the money?"

"We'll give it to Tedlar's widow."

"He didn't leave a widow," Dane laughed, "Who are the chocolates for?" he was intrigued.

"Someone in Poland."

"I wonder who?"

Kwinto only smiled and soon Dane laughed, amused.

The guard walked up to Kramer's cell door.

"Kramer, you got a parcel from Switzerland."

A moment later, a loud cry broke the silence: "Kwinto, you SOB! Just you wait! You haven't heard the last of me!"

courtesy (of Kramer) tu: k*orzystamy ze wspaniałomyślności Kramera*;

teller *kasjer w banku* in Polish; **scrutinizing** *badawczy (wzrok)* in Polish;

briefcase *aktówka* in Polish

EXERCISES

I. COMPREHENSION
AND THE ART OF ASKING QUESTIONS

Exercise One

Answer the following questions about the story:

Chapter One
1. Why was Kramer doing time?
2. What had he expected from his lawyer?
3. What did Sztyc promise him?
4. What did Mme Zwirski help Kramer to do?
5. How did Kramer escape from jail?

Chapter Two
6. What was Kramer's plan now?
7. What had Kwinto been doing all that time?
8. How did Dane react to the news of Kramer's escape?
9. Who did the superintendent suspect first of all?
10. Why did Stawiski go to a joint?
11. Who finally agreed to hit Kwinto?

Chapter Three

12. What did Tedlar do first?
13. How did Sztyc decide to find Kwinto?
14. Where did Dane send Natalie?
15. How did Tedlar get to Dane?
16. What happened outside the hospital?
17. In what shape did Mox and Kwinto find Note?

Chapter Four

18. What did Note do to spy on Kramer?
19. Why did they send Note to Stawiski's villa?
20. How was Kramer planning to get to Switzerland?
21. What did Sztyc do to make Kwinto come to them?
22. How did Kwinto decide to save Justine?
23. What did Sztyc devise to catch Kwinto?

Chapter Five

24. How did Kwinto free himself?
25. What happened to Tedlar?
26. How was Kwinto honored after the fire?
27. How did Zwirski treat the warden?
28. Why did Kramer and Sztyc fl ee from the funeral?
29. Where did the poor warden find comfort?

Chapter Six

30. How did Sztyc save Kramer on the border?
31. Where did they finally land?
32. How did Kwinto punish Kramer?
33. Who did Kramer find in bed?

34. What present did Kramer receive?

Exercise Two

Look at this sentence: *Kramer's lawyer sprung him from jail.*

There's a glaring mistake here, as it was Sztyc, not the lawyer, who sprung Kramer from jail. To make sure we've heard it correctly we ask in disbelief: *Who sprung Kramer from jail? Sztyc did, of course.*

Now put such specific questions in disbelief to the following sentences, as they have misleading elements in each of them. And then provide the correct answer.

Chapter One

1. Kramer was enjoying his time in a hotel in Sikawa.

2. Sztyc promised to spring him from jail for $100.

3. Mme Zwirski came to the prison to ask Kramer for her money.

4. Kramer was dressed in a Pierre Cardin suit.

5. Mme Zwirski brought her dog in the package.

6. When the warden fell out of the car he was wearing his uniform.

Chapter Two

7. Kramer decided to escape to Switzerland first.

8. Kwinto got a call about a soccer game.

9. Kramer was holed up at his Commercial Bank.

10. Stawiski went to a joint to hire a catering service.

11. He wrote Kwinto's name in blood.

12. Melski was the name of the man Stawiski hired.

Chapter Three

13. Sztyc found Mme Zwirski's photo in the paper.
14. Paris was the place where Dane sent Natalie.
15. Tedlar shot Dane in the leg.
16. Tedlar was the man who passed Kwinto in the hospital corridor.
17. The sandwich man was dressed as the Big Bad Wolf.
18. They found Note enjoying married life.

Chapter Three

19. Note promised to tap Kwinto's phone.
20. The workers brought a horse into Stawiski's garage.
21. Sztyc took Justine to the zoo.
22. Marta drove Kwinto to Stawiski's villa.
23. Kwinto found Justine in a dresser.
24. They locked Kwinto in the safe.

Chapter Five

25. Kwinto roped a can to take a drink of water.
26. The fire brigade's bill was $100.
27. Zwirski decided to promote the warden.
28. The restaurant was celebrating Kwinto's release.
29. Kramer and Sztyc wanted to fl ee via Czechoslovakia.

Chapter Six

30. The guard took Kramer for Ludendorff.
31. The pilot demanded $5,000.
32. Kramer and Sztyc drank vodka in the villa.

33. Melski put the drunken warden in his bed.

34. Kwinto sent Kramer some Swiss cheese from Switzerland.

II. USE OF TENSES

Exercise Three

Put the verbs in brackets in their proper form.

1. He (sew) very efficiently, which only (show) he (be) at it for quite some time.

2. "I (come) to do business," the lady (go) on, "with Gustav Kramer, the swindler who (rob) his own bank.

3. "My husband and I (be) silent partners in Kramer's bank, the fact of which the press (not inform *passive*)."

4. But it (be) useless, as Kramer (be) deadly determined to get out and (not let) the warden go.

5. The Fiat (wait) for them, its engine (run).

6. "I (have) deliveries to make and I (see) what (cook) in town," Melski (say).

7. "Should Kramer (happen) to contact you, you (let) us know, honest citizen that you (be)."

8. Kramer (look) different now. He (grow) a beard and (wear) glasses.

9. "Even if he (kill) him, he (not know) where Kwinto (be) anyway," Sztyc (say).

10. "I just (get) my tools when he (start / shoot)," Dane (say).

11. (Walk) down the street, he (notice) Sztyc (watch) his parked car.

12. Sztyc (stand) at a distance (watch) them (drive) off, (frustrate).

13. "A guy (spring *passive*) from jail. He (think) he (have) a score to settle with me. But he (make) the mistake of (involve) Justine. He (punish *passive*)," Kwinto (tell) her.

14. Henry Kwinto! He (prefer / die) to (get / catch). He (must / lose) his marbles with old age.

15. "That (be) the last time I (play) a German," the actor who (play) the German guard (protest).

Exercise Four

Put the following verbs in their proper form.

1. This only made Sztyc (laugh) heartily.

2. "I'm taking a vacation. I suggest you (do) the same."

3. "I don't feel like (see) this place full of cops."

4. He added in a hurry seeing the knight (pull) a gun.

5. Sztyc was standing at a distance (watch) them (drive) off, frustrated.

6. He didn't hear Dane (call) him to come back.

7. He turned to Dane, "I'm glad (see) you (feel) better."

8. He opened the back door to let Kramer and Stawiski (enter).

9. "As for Alcatraz, I suggest you (forget) it."

10. Sztyc noticed a horse and cart (pass) by on the road.

III. COMPREHENSION

Exercise Five

Decide which of the characters match the descriptions: Kramer, Kwinto, Mme Zwirski, Tedlar, Sztyc, Dane, the warden, Kramer's lawyer, Stawiski.

1. "Come to think of it, you already owe me 965 zloties without the costs." "Whom have you hired?" Kramer shouted to Stawiski. "From now on he doesn't get another penny!"

2. A streetwise-looking prisoner. "You're a smart cookie," said Kramer. "You'll go far there."

3. And the beautiful, shapely brunette turned into a gorgeous blonde.

4. "You only got money on your mind," an old imate turned to him. "He's an Aries. They never let go," Melski said with certainty.

5. "You'll let us know, honest citizen that you are, won't you?" the superintendent asked him.

6. "You've never been late before," Marta said.

7. "Ever since I lost one of their tanks on the set, they won't lend me even a pair of leggings."

8. His false beard and glasses along with his new name made him look like the quintessential Jewish banker.

9. A man took Stawiski by the arm, "Me, I'm not superstitious." "I know him. A psycho," Kwinto answered.

10. There was a funny thing about his office. Over the window, hung a cage with a songbird.

IV. VOCABULARY AND COMPOSITION

Exercise Six

Below you have some loosely connected words that have something in common with the Sikawa prison: *prison*, *jail*, *maximum security*, *inmate*, *do time*, *cell*, *sentence*, *parole*, *appeal*, *lawyer*, *prison stripes*, *visiting room*, *iron bars*, *spring (from)*, *outside*, *innocent*, *guard*, *warden*, *gate*, *gate keeper*, *pay out*, r*un out*, *work out*, *and die out*, etc.

Try to describe the prison in your own words, its inmates, the conditions, and what goes on inside.

ANSWER KEY

TO SELECTED EXERCISES

Exercise Two

1. What was Kramer doing in Sikawa? He was doing time in prison.
2. For how much did Sztyc promise to spring Kramer from jail? For a half of what Kramer had abroad.
3. Why did Mme Zwirski come to the prison? To help Kramer escape.
4. How was Kramer dressed? In prison stripes.
5. What did she bring in the package? A pistol.
6. What was he wearing? Prison stripes.
7. What did he decide to do first? To have his revenge on Kwinto.
8. What did Kwinto get a call about? Kramer's escape.
9. Where did Kramer hole up? At Stawiski's villa.
10. What did he go to hire? A hitman.
11. How did he write Kwinto's name? In the spilt salt.
12. What was the name of the man he hired? Tedlar.
13. Whose photo did he find in the paper? Natalie's.
14. Where did Dane send Natalie? To Lvov.
15. Where did Tedlar shoot Dane? In the side.

16. Who passed Kwinto in the hospital corridor? Sztyc did.

17. How was the sandwich man dressed? As a milk bottle.

18. What did they find Note doing? Despairing after his wife's leaving.

19. Whose phone did Note promise to tap? Stawiski's.

20. What did they bring into the garage? A big safe.

21. Where did Sztyc take Justine? To Stawiski's villa.

22. Who drove Kwinto to Stawiski's villa? Dane, Mox, and Note did.

23. Where did Kwinto find Justine? In the safe.

24. What did they do to Kwinto? They shut him behind an iron curtain.

25. Why did Kwinto rope a can? To make an explosion.

26. How much was the bill?

127 zloties.

27. What did Zwirski decide to do? To fire the warden unless he found Kramer.

28. What were they doing in the restaurant? They were having a wake for Kwinto.

29. What way did they want to fl ee? Via Germany.

30. Whom did the guard take Kramer for? A Jew.

31. How much did the pilot demand? 3,000 francs.

32. What did they drink in the villa? Ballantine's whisky.

33. Where did Melski put the drunken warden? In Kramer's bed.

34. What did Kwinto send Kramer? Some chocolates.

Exercise Three

1. was sewing / showed / had been

2. have come / went / robbed

3. were / has not been informed
4. was / was / wouldn't let
5. was waiting / running
6. have / will see / is cooking / said
7. happen / let / are
8. looked / had grown / was wearing
9. had killed / wouldn't know / is / said
10. was getting / started shooting / said
11. Walking / noticed / watching
12. was standing / watching / drive / frustrated
13. was sprung / thinks / has / has made / involving / will be punished / told
14. preferred / dying / getting / caught / must have lost
15. is / play / had played / protested

Exercise Four

1. laugh
2. do
3. seeing
4. pull
5. watching / drive

Exercise Five

1. Kramer's lawyer
2. Sztyc
3. Mme Zwirski
4. Kramer

5. Stawiski
6. calling
7. see / are feeling
8. enter
9. that (you) forget
10. passing

6. Kwinto
7. Dane
8. Kramer in disguise
9. Tedlar
10. the warden

set up [slang] *wmanewrować kogoś w kłopoty* in Polish;

safecracker *kasiarz* in Polish;

dispose of tu: *to kill*;

defenestrate *to throw a person out of a window*;

settle scores [slang]*załatwiać porachunki* in Polish

do time [slang] *odsiadywać wyrok* in Polish;

maximum-security prison *więzienie o zaostrzonym rygorze* in Polish;

prison stripes *więzienne pasiaki* in Polish;

sentence (be) final tu:*wyrok prawomocny* in Polish;

parole *zwolnić warunkowo* in Polish;

spring [slang] *zorganizować ucieczkę z więzienia* in Polish;

owe *być winnym* in Polish

hire *nająć* in Polish;

inmate *prisoner*;

sewing work-room *szwalnia* in Polish;

dogged *zacięty* in Polish;

streetwise-(looking) [potocznie] *o wyglądzie cwaniaka* in Polish;

canvas *płótno* in Polish;

soak up *wchłaniać*, *absorbować* in Polish;

work out [slang] *odsiedzieć wyrok* in Polish

a deal [slang] *Zgoda!* in Polish;

up front [potocznie] *akonto* in Polish;

grand [slang] *tysiąc*;

on (one's) mind *to be thinking about*;

pull over *zjechać na pobocze i zatrzymać auto* in Polish;

warden *naczelnik więzienia* in Polish;

shapely *of a woman's figure with a pleasing shape*

hang up *to put down the (phone) receiver;*

frank *szczery, otwarty* in Polish

spa *a luxurious summer resort*;

mock *kpić* in Polish;

adjust tu: *poprawić ubranie na sobie* in Polish;

modestly *skromnie* in Polish;

wave (someone) away *odprawić (kogoś) gestem*in Polish;

put up tu: *zainwestować, wyłożyć (pieniądze)* in Polish;

warn *ostrzegać* in Polish;

crook tu: *oszustka* in Polish

baldhead [potocznie] ł*ysa pała* in Polish

struggle *to fight, to resist*;

nod *skinąć głową* in Polish;

stand at attention *stać na baczność* in Polish;

at gunpoint *trzymając na muszce* in Polish;

For God's sake *Na Boga!* in Polish;

collect oneself *pozbierać się* in Polish;

cart *wóz* in Polish

smart *elegant*;

fi**le** tu: *piłować pilnikiem*, *pilnik* in Polish;

wig *peruka* in Polish;

fall for [potocznie] *dać się nabrać* in Polish;

cheek *policzek* in Polish;

search tu: r*ewidować* in Polish

lie low [potocznie] *siedzieć cicho* in Polish;

funeral *pogrzeb* in Polish;

foot the bill tu: *fundować* in Polish;

loony *madman*;

bulvon [slang] *bałwan* in Polish;

behind bars *in prison*;

break out *to escape from jail*;

porch *weranda* in Polish;

crate a *box made of wood*;

overseer *zarządca* in Polish

raise *podnieść* in Polish;

toothache *ból zęba* in Polish;

hole up [slang] *ukryć*, *zamelinować* in Polish;

basement *piwnica* in Polish;

grow a beard *zapuścić brodę* in Polish

fake *podrobiony* in Polish;

The heat is on [slang] *zrobiło się gorąco (niebezpiecznie)* in Polish;

obituary *a notice of the death of a person*;

revenge *zemsta* in Polish;

customer*client*;

joint *a dirty, cheap restaurant or nightclub*;

demimonde [slang] *półświatek* in Polish;

roofing *krycie dachu*, tu: *mokra robota* in Polish;

pick and choose [potocznie]*przebierać i wybrzydzać* in Polish;

hit *kill*

spill *rozsypać* in Polish;

superstitious *przesądny* in Polish

shutter *zamykać okiennice* in Polish;

give (someone) a scare [potocznie] *napędzić (komuś) stracha* in Polish;

tip off [slang] *zakablować, donieść policji* in Polish;

tap a phone*założyć podsłuch telefoniczny* in Polish

Aries *Baran* (znak zodiaku);

let go [potocznie] *popuścić, swolgować* in Polish;

recklessness *nierozwaga* in Polish;

dressing gown *szlafrok* in Polish;

blow [slang] *lose, waste*;

lose track of [potocznie] *zgubić ślad* in Polis

get back at [slang] *porachować się z* in Polish;

flush (someone, something) out [slang] *wykurzyć (kogoś, coś) z nory* in Polish;

decoy *przynęta* in Polish;

pay off *to make a profit*;

suppress *to stop publication (of)*

outside [slang] *at large, at liberty*;

extra *statysta* in Polish;

medieval *of the Middle Ages*;

grab *catch*;

pass out *stracić przytomność* in Polish

(as) bait tu: *(na) wabia* in Polish;

morgue a *place where dead bodies are kept*;

eager *enthusiastic and willing to do something*;

mind the store [potocznie] *pilnować interesu* in Polish

sandwich man *człowiek ubrany w reklamę jakiegoś produktu* in Polish;

orphan *a child whose parents are dead;*

confectionery *a store where cakes and candy are sold*

anxious *zaniepokojony* in Polish;

in a jam *[slang] w opałach in Polish;*

not to give a damn [slang] *nic nie obchodzić* in Polish;

cutlery *knives, forks, and spoons*

pull (oneself) together [potocznie] *wziąć się w garść* in Polish;

mess *bałagan* in Polish;

cut (someone) dead [slang] *ignore (someone)*;

sob *łkać* in Polish;

to and fro *tam i z powrotem*;

bum [slang, pogardliwie o człowieku] *szmata* in Polish;

tail [slang] *to secretly follow someone*

settle up tu: *rozliczyć się* in Polish;

brighten up *poweseleć*, *rozchmurzyć się* in Polish;

get on with it *continue whatever you're doing*

receiver tu: sł*uchawka telefoniczna* in Polish;

S**OB** [slang] *sukinsyn* in Polish

turnoff *zjazd w bok z autostrady* in Polish;

I take after you tu: *to cecha rodzinna* in Polish

wealth *riches*;

deckchair *leżak* in Polish

on the set *na planie filmowym* in Polish;

Y**ou got it Y***ou may be sure of that*;

unanimous *jednogłośny* in Polish

involve *wciągnąć, włączyć* in Polish

the Lindbergh case *przypadek Lindbergha* (dotyczy głośnego porwania dziecka słynnego lotnika);

lose (one's) touch [potocznie] *wyjść z wprawy* in Polish

vindictive mś*ciwy* in Polish;

turn (someone) in *oddać w ręce policji* in Polish;

lose (one's) marbles *pomieszać w głowie, postradać zmysły* in Polish;

catch red-handed *przyłapać na gorącym uczynku* in Polish;

cage *klatka* in Polish;

softy [potocznie] *mięczak* in Polish;

the end justifies the means *cel uświęca środki* in Polish

come up *happen*;

The leopard cannot change his spots odpowiednik polskiego przysłowia: *Natura ciągnie wilka do lasu*;

r**ope** *to catch with a lasso;*

undaunted *niezrażony* in Polish

trap *zasadzka* in Polish;

charred *zwęglony* in Polish;

cortege *a ceremonial funeral procession*;

altar boy *ministrant* in Polish

push (one's) luck [potocznie] *igrać z ogniem* in Polish;

come unstuck *odlepić się* in Polish;

on the carpet *before an authority or superior for a reprimand*;

Needle in a haystack *Igła w stogu siana* in Polish;

mock-up *makieta* in Polish

booby trap *zapadnia* in Polish;

border *granica państwa* in Polish;

fault tu: *wina* in Polish;

Step on it [potocznie] *dodaj gazu* in Polish;

detour *objazd* in Polish

on the house [potocznie] *na rachunek firmy* in Polish;

wake *a watch or vigil by the body of a dead person before funeral*;

excon [slang] *więzień po odbyciu wyroku* in Polish;

checkpoint *a place along a road or border where travelers are stopped for inspection*;

Steady on! [potocznie] *Spokojnie, bez nerwów!* in Polish;

conjunctivitis *zapalenie spojówek*in Polish;

declare *oclić* in Polish

customs officer *celnik* in Polish;

destination tu: *kraj docelowy* in Polish;

purpose tu: *W jakim celu?* in Polish

license *pozwolenie* in Polish;

bribe *przekupić* in Polish;

close call *a narrow escape from danger or trouble*;

generous *hojny* in Polish;

on board *na pokładzie* in Polish;

take off *to start (of a plane)*

deed *uczynek* in Polish;

gulp ł*yk* in Polish;

down payment *zaliczka* in Polish;

gleam bł*yszczeć niezbyt wyraźnie* in Polish

stepping stone *etap przejściowy*, k*olejny krok na drodze do kariery* in Polish;

goal *cel ostateczny* in Polish;

smart cookie [slang] *a clever person*;

sleep like a log [potocznie] *spać jak suseł* in Polish